

wherein the optical means is of the multifocus type,
the assist gas is an oxygen/nitrogen mixture, and no gas other
than the assist gas is supplied to the nozzle.

Cancel claim 4. /

Cancel claim 13. /

Cancel claim 16. /

Cancel claims 17-21. /

REMARKS

This application has been amended so as to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Office action.

This amendment has been filed in connection with a Request for Continued Examination (RCE). The undersigned attended a personal interview on August 29, 2002 with Examiner Johnson. In connection with such interview, applicants' representative discussed a draft claim to independent claim 1, which draft is reproduced identically in the present amendment. The Interview Summary prepared in connection with such interview states that "[a]pplicant's proposed amendment (attached) overcomes the rejection because the secondary reference, Couch, Jr. et al. (5,653,896) teach the use of both a reactive gas and